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AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
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AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN

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SUBJECT: AT LAUNCH OF PEACE CHAIR, ZUMA TALKS OF VIOLENT CRIME

¶1. ANC President Jacob Zuma acknowledged the challenge of violent crime and murder during his keynote address at the inauguration of the Gandhi-Luthuli Chair of Peace Studies at the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) on September 18. Zuma, who shared the stage with Indian Minister of State for External Affairs Anand Sharma--a long-time anti-apartheid ally of the ANC's--referred to the negative Indian press on crime against South Africans of Indian origin. He assured Sharma and the audience (full of both Zuma's supporters as well as many prominent members of the Indian community) of the ANC's commitment to addressing crime. Zuma singled out the "street committee" initiative that was launched in KwaZulu Natal as a successful example of ANC efforts to fight crime. Comment: Zuma's remarks were likely made with South African Indian voters in mind--the Indian community is less politically predictable and can affect ANC provincial-level results in KwaZulu Natal. End comment.

¶2. The recent negative reporting in the Indian press was prompted by the brutal murders of a well-known lawyer, Naren Sham, his wife, and 20-year old son (a law student at UKZN) at their Durban home in early September--the three were found bound and gagged, stabbed multiple times and with their throats slit. These killings were not the only murders of South African Indians in recent weeks, others include the murder of a Durban jeweller, Pat Pather, during a robbery at his business downtown in late August, and the robbery and strangling of a mother and daughter, Rajini and Damini Narainsamy, at their home in the KwaZulu Natal town of Newcastle in mid-September.

¶3. The high profile inauguration and the enthusiastic reception of Zuma was covered extensively in local media. Media reports noted the irony of Zuma's extolling the virtues of Mahatma Gandhi and Albert Luthuli and the principles of peace and non-violence while his own supporters from the ANC youth league continue their aggressive "kill for Zuma" posturing.

DERDERIAN